R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 013 917 VT 002 196

THE EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF PRISONERS.

BY- BOYLES, GARY
NORTH DAKOTA UNIV., GRAND FORKS, COLL. OF EDUC.

REPORT NUMBER UND-CRVTE-RR-5 PUB DATE MAY 67
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.84 21P.

DESCRIPTORS- *VOCATIONAL INTERESTS, CORRECTIVE INSTITUTIONS, ASPIRATION, *OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE, *PRISONERS, *EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES, *EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES, OCCUPATIONAL GUIDANCE, AGE DIFFERENCES, NORTH DAKOTA,

INSTRUMENTS TO ASSESS PRISONERS' VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK WERE COMPLETED BY 175 INMATES IN NORTH DAKOTA IN THE SPRING OF 1966. UPON RELEASE, 35 PERCENT PLANNED TO GET MORE EDUCATION, 52 PERCENT PLANNED TO GET A JOB, SEVEN PERCENT PLANNED TO WORK AT HOME, AND SIX PERCENT HAD NO DEFINITE PLANS. SATISFACTION WITH ASSISTANCE IN OCCUPATIONAL PLANNING WAS INDICATED BY 55 PERCENT, AND SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL PLANNING WAS INDICATED BY 45 PERCENT. THE NINE VOCATIONAL COURSES IN WHICH AT LEAST 20 INMATES EXPRESSED AN INTEREST WERE -- (1) HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, (2) WELDING, (3) AUTO MECHANICS, (4) AUTO BODY REBUILDING, (5) FARM MANAGEMENT, (6) BRICKLAYING, (7) CARPENTRY, (8) FARM EQUIPMENT MECHANICS, AND (9) BARBERING. PERMANENT JOBS WERE DESIRED BY 90 PERCENT, AND WELL-PAID JOBS WERE DESIRED BY TEN PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS. INTERESTING WORK AND A STABLE, SECURE FUTURE WERE THE TWO FEATURES MOST OFTEN CONSIDERED IMPORTANT. YOUNGER OFFENDERS MOST OFTEN EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN EDUCATION, WHILE OLDER OFFENDERS DESIRED A JOB. (EM)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED013917

The Educational and Vocational Aspirations of Prisoners

Research Report No. 5

CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN
VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

College of Education
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks

VT 02196

May, 1967

FOREWORD

Persons newly released from prison frequently find themselves confronting prejudices, barred from jobs involving trust, and deficient in job skills. If recidivism is to be minimized and if society is to make maximum use of these potential workers, the prisoner must be given assistance.

Too often, work and training in correctional institutions are oriented toward institutional maintenance and governmental needs rather than toward the development of marketable skills. There is an urgent need to strengthen training and job adjustment programs for prisoners and parolees in order to promote their rehabilitation and conversion into productive workers and citizens. It is the purpose of the present study to determine the extent of this need for the prison inmates of North Dakota.

The survey of the State Penitentiary and State Farm in Bismarck was conducted by Gary Boyles, Research Assistant at the Center. The cooperation given by Warden Redman, of the State Penitentiary, is gratefully acknowledged. Finally, thanks are due to all of the men who responded to the questionnaire.

Elwyn H. Nagel
Director, Center for Research in
Vocational and Technical Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
PROCEDURE	3
RESULTS	4
CONCLUSIONS	12
REFERENCES	13
APPENDIX	14

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INMATES	4
2.	JOB PLANS OF INMATES UPON RELEASE	4
3.	SATISFACTION OF PRISONER WITH ASSISTANCE GIVEN IN MAKING PLANS	5
4.	OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION AND ASPIRATIONS OF INMATES	6
5.	VOCATIONAL COURSES IN WHICH RESPONDENTS EXPRESSED INTEREST	8
6.	JOB PREFERENCE EXPRESSED BY INMATES	9
7.	FEATURES OF WORK IMPORTANT TO INMATES	10

INTRODUCTION

"The most striking fact about the correctional apparatus today," says the U.S. Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, "is that, although the rehabilitation of criminals is presumably its major purpose, the custody of criminals is actually its major task" (Time, 1967). The Commission, which has authority over 1,300,000 offenders, one-third of whom are now in prisons, states that too many present day prisons stress punishment instead of rehabilitation. Prisons, the Commission asserts, need to have practical training programs which will prepare the convict for a job after release. Such efforts in the past, the Commission finds, have been far more successful than employment of inmates trained in such currently popular prison industries as digging potatoes and turning out auto license plates for the state.

Ex-prisoners make up one of the most vocationally handicapped groups in our society and thus are one of the groups most in need of vocational rehabilitation. The ex-prisoner is very often a poorly educated individual who never obtained the level of skill or degree of training needed to acquire a job providing a sufficient wage and self-respect. It is a common experience for the prisoner just released to find that the jobs available to him are of a short-term marginal nature, due partly to his lack of training and partly to the attitude of employers toward his prison record. Typically, the ex-prisoner must face long periods of unemployment, humiliation, and depression, even though he possesses the motivation to do an honest day's work. The unfortunate result, for both the man and society, is a return to prison. If this

cycle of recidivism is not interrupted, the outlook for the prisoner is dim.

For each man confined to prison the mean cost, per year, to maintain him there is between $2,000 and $2,500. A portion of this money must be used to help rehabilitate the prisoner vocationally, for the cycle of recidivism can be broken only by a conscientious program of training designed to meet the needs of the prisoner. It is the purpose of the present study to assess these needs as they exist among the inmates of North Dakota.

The Assessment of Training Needs

Full employment is a major objective of the Department of Labor, which has encouraged research in the area of vocational training in prisons. A recent Department of Labor study (1965) showed that pre-prison work experience was usually in the least skilled and most unstable jobs. It was also found, after examining a survey of Federal prison releasees, that within the first three months after release only two-fifths of the releasees had been able to find employment as much as 80 per cent of the time, while one-fifth had not been able to find a job of any kind.

Brewer (1964) found in his study of the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, and other prisons in that area, that 66 per cent of the prisoners expressed the desire for more job training and 61 per cent desired the assistance of vocational rehabilitation upon release; however, in contrast, only 27 per cent of the prisoners were judged eligible and 43 per cent were recommended by case workers and probation officers. For

all cases, those desiring more occupational training and vocational rehabilitation assistance were disfavored in eligibility.

Studies like these show the great need for vocational guidance, skill training, remedial education, and job referral for prisoners. The present study is designed to determine the extent of these needs for North Dakota's prison inmates.

PROCEDURE

In North Dakota, the adult criminal offender is placed at the State Penitentiary and State Farm in Bismarck. The institution has an average population of 250 inmates, with approximately 150 admissions annually. In the Spring of 1966, the Center for Research in Vocational and Technical Education cooperated with officials at the State Penitentiary to initiate a study of the vocational interests and aspirations of the State Penitentiary inmates. A questionnaire (Appendix) was cooperatively developed by members of both staffs to assess the inmate's vocational aspirations and his attitudes toward work.

The Warden and staff of the State Penitentiary explained and distributed the questionnaires to 259 male inmates. There were 175 questionnaires returned. Included in this number are questionnaires in which some items were not answered by the respondent, so that the total number of responses for some tables is less than 175.

The occupational prestige rating scale employed in this study was developed by Haller and Miller (1961).

RESULTS

The age distribution of inmates who returned the questionnaires is given in Table 1. Over two-thirds of the inmates were from 20 to 39 years of age. A little less than half of the prisoners fell into the 20 to 30 year group.

TABLE 1

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INMATES

Age	Number	Percent
Under 19	12	7
20 - 29	78	46
30 - 39	42	25
40 - 49	21	12
50 - 59	14	8
60 - 69	2	1
Over 70	2	1
	171	100

Preferences for the future, with respect to attending school, obtaining a job or working at home are presented in Table 2. Most respondents had definite plans. Sixty-seven per cent of the youngest category wished to return to school. The desire to get a job increased with the age of the prisoner. The 50-years-old or older group had less definite vocational plans than did the younger age groups.

Table 3 reports the opinion of inmates concerning the adequacy

of the personal assistance and information given them in making their educational and occupational plans. The majority was satisfied with the assistance given in occupational planning but not with the help obtained in making plans for further education.

TABLE 2

JOB PLANS OF INMATES UPON RELEASE

	Percent by Age Group					
Plan	19 & Under (N=12)	20-29 (N=78)	30-39 (N=42)	40-49 (N=21)	50 & Over (N=18)	Total (N=171)
1. Go to school	67	40	41	14	6	35
2. Get a job	25	46	55	76	55	52
3. Work at home	8	10	2	0	11	7
4. No definite plans	0	4	2	10	28	6

TABLE 3

SATISFACTION OF PRISONER WITH ASSISTANCE GIVEN IN MAKING PLANS

	Occupational Planning		Educational Planning	
Satisfied	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	93	55.0	69	45
No	76	45.0	85	55

Tables 4 through 7 present the data relating to occupational choice. As indicated in Table 4, most of the respondents had held

jobs in the "farmer or laborer" category. "Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred" was the next most frequently listed category. Of the eighteen per cent who listed themselves as having been employed in operative jobs, most had been truck drivers. Less than 2 per cent had been employed in professional, technical and kindred occupations, although 5 per cent indicated a desire for such jobs upon release. Clerical work was also an area in which few inmates had experience, nor did they desire such work. Sales work appeared desirable to more respondents than had actually been employed in this work.

Among the jobs held by respondents, those in the crafts seemed to be preferred, while the least liked was common labor. The prestige rating of the best liked job was slightly higher than that of the least preferred type of work.

The job desired by the inmate upon release has a higher prestige rating, on the average, than the job he had before imprisonment. This finding may reflect the desire of the inmate to improve his position after his release from prison.

The occupations of the parents of the respondents are also presented in Table 4. The totals in these categories do not include parents listed as deceased, retired, unemployed or as housewives. The percentages have been calculated using only the number for which a definite job was listed. Fathers, when employed, were most often farmers or laborers. The job prestige rating of the inmate's parents was lower than that of the inmate.

Forty-five per cent of the inmates indicated vocational courses in which they would be interested in enrolling. The interest expressed

TABLE 4

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION AND ASPIRATIONS OF INMATES

Type of Job	Past job listed 1st %	Past job listed 2nd %	Past job listed 3rd %	Past job liked best %	Past job liked least %	Job planned upon release %	Job desired upon release (1st) %	Job desired upon release (2nd) %	Best friend's job choice %	Father's Occupation %	Mother's Occupation %
Professional, Technical, and Kindred	1.7	2.4	2.4	4.1	0	5.0	4.8	3.8	4.2	1.8	16.2
Farm and/or Construction	30.3	39.0	48.2	26.3	53.4	39.6	29.7	31.8	36.8	52.2	10.8
Manager and/or Proprietor	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.8	.6	1.2	.6	3.2	0	5.3	8.1
Clerical and Kindred	1.1	2.4	.6	1.2	.6	1.9	1.2	1.3	0	.9	5.4
Craftsmen, Foremen, and Kindred	28.0	28.4	22.3	31.0	15.7	25.2	33.9	36.3	31.6	23.0	0
Operative and Kindred	18.3	10.0	13.8	16.4	11.9	8.8	8.5	12.1	7.4	5.3	0
Service	10.8	11.2	6.6	12.9	10.7	11.9	11.5	8.3	14.7	9.7	54.0
Sales	7.4	4.7	4.2	6.4	6.9	6.3	9.7	3.2	5.3	1.8	5.4
Number of Responses	175	169	166	171	159	159	165	157	95	113	37
Average Job Prestige Rating	57.8	57.5	57.4	58.3	56.0	58.6	58.5	57.9	58.9	56.2	53.3

TABLE 5

VOCATIONAL COURSES IN WHICH RESPONDENTS EXPRESSED INTEREST

Course	Number of Times Checked	Percent of Choices
Heavy equipment operation and mechanics	55	10.9
Welding	51	10.1
Auto mechanics	46	9.1
Autobody rebuilding	27	5.3
Agriculture farm management	23	4.6
Bricklaying	22	4.4
Carpentry	21	4.2
Farm equipment mechanics	21	4.2
Barber	20	4.0
Radio and t.v. repair	14	2.8
Plumbing	13	2.6
Sheet metal	12	2.4
Machinist	11	2.2
Accounting	11	2.2
Sales training	11	2.2
Medical laboratory assistant	10	2.0
Tool and Die maker	9	1.8
Commercial artist	9	1.8
Sales and service management	8	1.6
Baker	8	1.6
Upholstering	6	1.2
Shoe repair	-	-
Floral shop operation	-	-
Appliance repair	-	-
Aviation mechanics	-	-
Bookkeeping	-	-
Air conditioning and refrigeration	5	1.0
Cabinet making	-	-
Electrician (construction)	-	-
Clerical training	4	.8
Tailoring	-	-
Dental assistant	3	.6
Electricity (maintenance)	-	-
Engineering Drafting	-	-
Architectural Drafting technician	-	-
Watch repair	-	-
Printer	-	-
Industrial drafting	-	-
Data Processing technician	2	.4
Electronic technician	-	-
Technical drafting	-	-
Furnace repair	1	.2
Medical secretary	-	-
Secretarial training	-	-

by these inmates in various vocational courses is shown in Table 5. Heavy equipment operation, welding and auto mechanics attracted the most interest, corresponding to the type of job the respondents desired upon release.

Concerning the type of job desired, Table 6 indicates that most inmates regard permanence of a job as more important than high pay. Of those who were more interested in high paying jobs, most were either under 20 or over 50 years of age. The importance attached to a high paying job decreased through the 20 to 49 year age group.

TABLE 6

JOB PREFERENCE EXPRESSED BY INMATES

	Percent by Age Group					
Preference	19 & Under	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 & Over	Total N
	(12)	(78)	(42)	(21)	(18)	(171)
1. Long lasting job	83	90	93	95	78	90
2. High paying job	17	10	7	5	22	10

Job characteristics in their order of importance to the repondents are indicated in Table 7. Inmates were to check five of the fifteen possible choices, although some checked less than this.

All inmates expressed a preference for interesting work, with high income being of less importance. Few were interested in the opportunity to supervise. The availability of jobs in a local area was also of little concern. The respondents were willing to move around

to find a job, and once they find it they have little interest in further education or training. Of great importance is the ability to look forward to a stable and secure future.

Younger respondents saw the opportunity to work with others as a major consideration in future work plans. The middle age-groups desired the opportunity to spend time with their families, a factor not as important to the under-20 and over-50 groups. Jobs suitable to one's ability were sought after more by the older groups.

Generally, the under-20 and over-50 groups responded similarly to the list of important work features. Analyses of responses from all age groups show that interesting work was chosen most often. Next in importance was the desire for a stable, secure future. Items of least importance were the opportunity to supervise others and the opportunity to pursue further studies.

TABLE 7

FEATURES OF WORK IMPORTANT TO INMATES

Important Work Feature	Percent by age group					
	19 & Under N = 12	20-29 N = 72	30-39 N = 42	40-49 N = 21	50 & Over N = 18	Totals N = 171
1. High Income	10.2	5.3	7.8	4.8	8.1	6.4
2. Interesting work	15.2	16.7	17.0	18.1	14.9	16.7
3. Fits ability	8.5	8.0	9.7	11.4	10.8	9.2
4. Opportunity to travel	1.7	5.3	3.9	2.8	5.4	4.4
5. Jobs available locally	0	3.4	2.4	3.8	4.0	3.0
6. Opportunity to help others	6.8	5.6	4.4	7.6	5.4	5.6
7. Opportunity to work with people	13.6	8.2	6.8	6.7	9.4	8.2
8. Opportunity to supervise others	3.4	1.1	1.4	0	2.7	1.3
9. Opportunity to get ahead rapidly	3.4	4.5	5.3	5.7	4.0	4.8
10. Opportunity to work with things (materials)	1.7	8.2	5.8	5.7	4.0	6.4
11. Insures a stable and secure future	16.9	13.5	16.0	14.3	14.9	14.6
12. Permits time for family life	3.4	9.8	9.7	10.5	5.4	9.0
13. Permits time for own interests and hobbies	6.8	3.4	3.9	2.8	6.8	4.0
14. Opportunity to pursue further studies	6.8	4.0	4.8	4.8	1.4	4.3
Number of Choices	59	377	206	105	74	821

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the survey indicate that more help should be given to inmates in making their educational and occupational plans. Approximately half of the offenders requested such assistance. Since the experience and interest of the inmates appear to lie in the skill areas, these areas should receive some consideration in plans for an educational program. Many of the inmates have already had experience in some skill areas. Additional training would enable them to raise their proficiency and hold more satisfying jobs.

The results point out the need for additional effort to improve the educational program at the institution, especially in the area of vocational education. Additional proficiency would help the prisoner meet his expressed need for security and interesting work. Younger offenders expressed an interest in school and in vocational courses upon release, while older inmates will seek a job instead. If inmates are to acquire the needed job skills, they must do so before release. With the help of an improved educational program the inmate will be better prepared to make the transition from his past life to a productive place in society.

REFERENCES

Brewer, E.D.C. A vocational rehabilitation study of prisoners, probationers and parolees. Research Report, Emory University, 1964.

Haller, Archibald O., and Miller, Irwin W. The occupational aspiration scale: theory, structure, and correlates. Technical Bulletin No. 288. Michigan State University, 1961.

Time, Inc. Crime & the great society. March 24, 1967.

U.S. Department of Labor Training needs in correctional institutions. Manpower Research Bulletin No. 8. Manpower Administration, Office of Manpower, Automation, and Training, Washington, D.C., September 1965.

APPENDIX

VOCATIONAL INTEREST SURVEY

Please do not put your name on this questionnaire Age _____

---

1. List three different kinds of jobs you have worked at in the past. (For example: Truck Driving, Sales Clerk)

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

2. Of the jobs you had in the past, what kind of job did you like best?

   _____

3. Of the jobs you had in the past, what kind of job did you like least?

   _____

4. Which one of the following would you like to do in the future? (Check the answer)

   _____ 1. Go to school
   _____ 2. Get a job
   _____ 3. Work at home
   _____ 4. No definite plans

5. If you plan to work, what kind of job do you plan to have?

   _____

6. What kind of work would you like best to be doing upon your release?

   First Choice _____ Second Choice _____

7. What kind of work is your best friend thinking about doing?

   _____

8. What is the kind of work done by your:

   (a) Father _____ (b) Mother _____

9. Would you rather have a high paying job that might not last a long time or a job you know you can have for a long time but that pays less money? (Check one)

   _____ A job that will last for a long time

   _____ A high paying job

10. Check below the five things about work that are most important to you.

____ 1. High income
____ 2. Interesting work
____ 3. Suits your ability
____ 4. Opportunity to travel
____ 5. Jobs available locally
____ 6. Opportunity to help others
____ 7. Opportunity to work with people
____ 8. Opportunity to supervise others
____ 9. Opportunity to get ahead rapidly
____ 10. Opportunity to work with things (materials)
____ 11. Being able to look forward to stable, secure future
____ 12. Have time for one's family
____ 13. Have time to pursue one's interests and hobbies
____ 14. Opportunity to pursue further studies
____ 15. Opportunity to pursue one's work studies

11. Do you feel you are provided with adequate information and personal assistance in helping you make occupational plans?

Occupational plans Yes ___ No ___ Educational plans Yes ___ No ___

12. If you are interested in getting vocational education, in which of the following courses would you be interested in enrolling? (Choose three that interest you most.)

___ Accounting
___ Agriculture-Farm Management
___ Airconditioning & Refrigeration
___ Appliance Repair
___ Auto Body Rebuilding
___ Auto Mechanics
___ Aviation Mechanics
___ Baker
___ Barber
___ Bookkeeping
___ Bricklaying
___ Cabinetmaking
___ Carpentry
___ Chef or Cook
___ Clerical Training
___ Commercial Artist
___ Data Processing Technician
___ Dental Assistant
___ Electric Power Technician
___ Electrician (Construction)
___ Electricity (Maintenance)
___ Electronic Technician
___ Engineering Drafting
___ Farm Equipment Mechanics
___ Architectural Drafting Technician
___ Floral Shop Operation
___ Furnace Repair
___ Heavy Equipment Operation & Mechanics
___ Industrial Drafting Technician
___ Machinist
___ Medical Laboratory Assistant
___ Medical Secretary
___ Needle Arts and Sewing
___ Patternmaking
___ Plumbing
___ Printer (Graphic Arts)
___ Radio and TV Repair
___ Sales and Service Management
___ Sales Training
___ Secretarial Training
___ Sheet Metal
___ Shoe Repair
___ Tailoring
___ Technical Drafting
___ Tool and Die Maker
___ Upholstering
___ Watch Repair
___ Welding
___ _____(other)
___ _____(other)